

FURTHER PROBE FOR ELECTRIC MONOPOLY FAVORED BY COUNCIL

Information Desired on Great Disparity Between Value of Property for Taxation and its Value as Source of Profit—Full Taxation of Company's Property Reduced Rate for Public Lighting and Protection For Private Consumers Are Objects Sought.

The Common Council is expected to take some action tonight relative to the further investigation of the Electric Light monopoly. The administration is pledged to such an investigation. Upon the other hand the monopoly has submitted a proposed contract, in which they offer a reduced rate for the electric lighting of the streets.

It is not considered probable that the Aldermen will adopt the proposed contract until the relations between the city and the company have been further inquired into.

While it is not doubted that the committee named by Mayor Lee to investigate was honest, the results that it procured are far from satisfactory to the great majority of business men who are customers of the monopoly. It is notoriously unsatisfactory to Mayor Buckingham, who has discussed the subject in his message.

The resolution under which the Lee committee acted was exceedingly narrow. It gave the committee authority only to inquire if there had been a reduction in the cost of producing the electricity used in producing the street lights.

A committee to do effective work should have power to investigate the whole relations between the company and the city to see if it is performing the duties required of it under its contract with the city, under its charter, and under the laws regulating monopoly.

There are certain facts which the city must know before it can deal intelligently with the monopoly for the protection of the city and its inhabitants who buy electricity.

One of the most important of these facts is a knowledge of the investment that the company has made in its business in Bridgeport.

This knowledge is necessary for two reasons. The first reason is that the property may be taxed at its fair value.

The second reason is of another kind. The electric monopoly is not like an ordinary business. Ordinary business is competitive. The grocer may charge what he pleases for his goods. He will not usually charge too much, because the competition of other grocers will keep the price regulated.

But the price a monopoly can charge must be regulated by law. A monopoly can charge only a reasonable price.

A reasonable price in law is such a price as will give the company no more than a fair dividend on its actual investment. Six per cent. is probably a fair dividend.

It is impossible for the city to determine if the company is selling its product at a reasonable price without knowing what the investment of the company is.

The company is upon the list of 1908 as having taxable property worth only about \$300,000.

If this is the true value of the company's property a very casual consideration of its income will show that it is charging more than a reasonable price. The company's property is valued at more than \$300,000 the presence of that property should be accurately ascertained. If it has an investment of a million dollars in property, the fact that it is not regarded as improbable, the discovery of that value and its listing would give the city an additional income of \$700,000.

This is almost five times the amount to be saved to the city by the acceptance of the reduced price for lighting at the expense of discontinuing the inquiry.

Persons claiming to represent the company have been interviewing Aldermen and urging them not to investigate.

For some mysterious reason certain local newspapers are urging that the mantle of darkness be thrown over the affairs of the monopoly and that the concession on the price of lights be accepted.

50 FIREMEN BARELY ESCAPE AWFUL DEATH

Last Had Just Left Turning Building When Terrible Explosion Followed—Chief Croker's Good Judgment—Loss \$200,000.

(Special from the United Press.) New York, Dec. 20.—A mysterious explosion following a fire, completely wrecked the big factory building, 132-134 14th street just east of 6th avenue early today and only the instinct of Chief Croker prevented the loss of half a hundred firemen who were working inside of the structure.

Croker who had responded to the third alarm, after looking at the fire which seemed about to get beyond control, ordered all of his men out of the building. The last of them had barely reached the street when a terrific explosion took place, all of the windows front and back and portions of the floors being blown out.

A number of firemen were hit by glass and timbers but no one was seriously hurt.

The big dormitory of the Salvation Army, whose National headquarters is in this block, was damaged by the explosion and 100 men and women, who are studying to be officers of the organization, were driven into the street. Their building was only slightly damaged.

The structure in which the fire broke out, was completely demolished, the loss being nearly \$200,000. The cause of the explosion is believed, to have been dust but this has not been definitely determined.

The occupants were braids and corset manufacturers, a cloth sponging concern, an engraving company and half a dozen novelty manufacturers.

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WHITEHEAD TAKES APART HIS BIG FLYING MACHINE

Disgusted at Lack of Interest in Aerial Navigation.

Says He Has Neglected His Work All Summer to Prepare Machine for Flight, and Now He Must Provide for Immediate Wants of His Own Family.

Despondent at the lack of interest shown in his efforts to master the problems of aerial navigation, Gustav Whitehead, the expert machinist and aeronaut, has dismantled his latest construction and is preparing to devote his time to preparing his little home in Tunix Hill road, Fairfield, for the winter.

Whitehead has succeeded in securing the co-operation of local men after his demonstration of the machine at the Brooklawn Golf links several weeks ago. But within the last fortnight he has suddenly lost interest. He has spent all his money in the purchase of materials and in payment for labor to assist him with his machine. He had planned to build a monorail upon which he expected to get his machine under sufficient headway to launch it into space, but he found the expense would be more than his measure purse could stand, so abandoned his efforts.

There is something pathetic in Whitehead's struggle to solve the problem of aerial navigation. He is an expert engine builder, and can construct engines of probably less weight per horse power more successfully than any other engine builder. He has spent the greater part of his life in experimenting with various types of flying machines, and eight years ago created considerable excitement when he made successful flights in Fairfield. He spends all he makes with his engine building in experiments with new ideas, and he has amassed a vast store of statistics on aerodynamics gathered from personal practical experience. Yet he is unable to enlist interest enough among men of wealth to enable him to construct a little stretch of track upon which he could launch his machine.

"It looks like a hard winter ahead," he said to a Farmer reporter today. "I'm going to give up trying to fly for the present, and prepare my little home for the winter. I've got to get some money together. I've neglected my own work this summer on my aeroplanes and now I've got to stop spending money or I'll have nothing to provide for my family."

INSURGENTS FROWN ON TAFT'S EXTRAS

(Special from United Press.) Washington, Dec. 20.—An effort will be made by certain insurgent Republicans in Congress this winter to knock out of the executive, legislative and judicial appropriation bill, the item of \$25,000 a year for traveling expenses of the President.

The item was included in last year's bill only after a hot fight on the floor of the House.

We didn't give the President that extra money to go about the country reading speeches and defending certain members of Congress, so as to re-elect them," said a Republican today. "I think it will be rather difficult for the President to secure that \$25,000 this time."

Noted Astronomer Says That Cook Faked the Flag

(Special from United Press.) Pittsburgh, Dec. 20.—That Dr. Frederick A. Cook admitted to him that he had in one particular "faked" the picture of the American flag at the North Pole, as shown in lectures, is the statement here of Dr. John A. Brashear, a noted astronomer connected with the University of Pittsburgh.

Dr. Brashear declared it had been a matter of discussion among scientists whether or not the picture of the flag to the Pole that this flag, on the top of the world, cast no shadow. At the time Cook says he planted the sun was slightly degraded and should have cast a long shadow, experts say.

Dr. Brashear stated that he asked Dr. Cook about the picture and that the doctor declared that the flag he photographed was really a miniature affair and that he had enlarged for his picture slides.

"When Cook was here lecturing I also asked him what sextant he used in making observations, and he replied that he could not remember. This to me is a curious statement, for the sextant is a very important part of the equipment of a polar explorer," Dr. Brashear declared.

Dr. Brashear does not believe that either Cook or Commander Peary can prove conclusively that they reached the Pole, but apparently has lost faith in Dr. Cook.

Small Fox Patient At Liberty Again; Cost City About \$200

Charles Newum, the smallpox patient who has been at the isolation hospital since October 8, when he was discovered at the Bridgeport Hospital, was discharged Saturday night. He will live with his brother Michael in Railroad avenue. The isolation hospital was fumigated by Dr. E. A. May.

It is not likely that Newum will be deported, although under the immigration laws he could be. He had the disease when he was an instructor of mathematics. Lieut. Fenton's home is in New Haven.

MISS HAWLEY WILL WED WEST POINT INSTRUCTOR.

Lieut. Chauncey Lee Fenton, U. S. A., and Miss Mary Hawley, of West Point, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles William Hawley of 903 Fairfield avenue, will be united in marriage at the South Congregational church at 7 o'clock Thursday evening.

CITY HELPLESS TO PREVENT DEATH TRAP ON STRATFORD AVE.

City Attorney Finds That Last Common Council Completely Gave Away the City's Rights—No Ground upon Which to Ask Court for Injunction to Prevent Laying of Trolley Tracks Put Down on Sunday, in the Night Season—Statement by Mayor Buckingham.

Beginning at midnight Saturday, the Connecticut Company spent the balance of Sunday, a day when civil process does not run, in establishing the so-called "death trap" across the sidewalk at Stratford avenue.

Indignation ran high among citizens this morning when it became known that the "job" put through by the Lee administration had been finally completed.

There was no need for the company to work in darkness and secrecy, nor on Sunday, however, for the reason that City Attorney Thomas M. Cullinan had already advised Mayor Buckingham that the city has no remedy. As the mayor is not addicted to grandstanding the company had nothing to apprehend and might have laid its tracks on a week day at a proper season.

But no effort upon the part of the city to enjoin the work was to be feared, because City Attorney Thomas M. Cullinan, after a most exhaustive inquiry into the matter, had advised Mayor Buckingham that the last Common Council, directed by Mayor Lee, had completely parted with all of the city's rights. He also said that he could not find a tangible ground upon which, in an application for an injunction, he would have any standing.

The city's rights in the matter of locating tracks are ordinarily few at the best. The company prepares its plans. The plans are submitted to the Common Council. The Common Council may refuse its approval. The matter may then go before the railroad commissioners.

The railroad commissioners, so far as the Stratford avenue crossing was concerned, were powerless to grant the company the right to lay tracks across the sidewalk and the city's rights in the matter of land owned by the company. The railroad commissioners had no power over the city's rights.

But when Mayor Lee and the Council took the matter out of the hands of the railroad commissioners and placed it in the hands of the city, this ended the contest.

UNCLASSIFIED

WANTED—Store boys for Xmas delivery. John Beck & Son. a

TO RENT—Five large rooms, 305 Jones avenue. T 29 b p o

TO RENT—Six room flat, 31 Hough avenue. D. R. Whitney, 1025 Main St. T 29 b o

TO RENT—Five room flat, 347 Wilmette avenue, \$12.00. D. R. Whitney, 1025 Main St. T 29 b o

FOR SALE—Six room cottage on Seaview avenue, lot 56x130, \$3,500. D. R. Whitney, 1025 Main St. T 29 b o

FOR SALE—Building lot on Catherine St. Whitney, 1025 Main St. T 29 b o

THE FOOT SPECIALIST that cures Dr. Mansfield, 101 Meigs Bldg. Afternoons and Sundays. a

LOST—Carbide hand lantern from chief's motor car. Finder please return to Fire Headquarters, Middle street, Board of Fire Commissioners. a

JUST RECEIVED: A large shipment of birch singing canaries. Make suitable Xmas presents. Courtney, 116 Wall street, upstairs. Open evenings. a p

DOGS, DOGS, DOGS. All kinds of small dogs. Nothing better for a Christmas present. Come see them. 543 North avenue. Tel. 2812. T 29 b o

WANTED—Mould makers. Address Rogers-Muir Plate Co., Danbury, Ct. T 18 b o

TO RENT—Six rooms; improvements; 103 Black Rock ave. Inquire on premises or 636 Lafayette St. T 17 a p o

BARGAINS IN CALENDARS, printed and delivered in five hours' notice. Large assortment for all trades. Any quantity. 11 So. Pub. Ch., 108 Congress St. T 17 a o

FOR SALE—Fisher, Behning, Gabler and Mathushek Upright Pianos for sale cheap. Dial & Lee Music Co., 84 Cannon St. T 16 t f o

FOR SALE—Here is a chance to make money. 4 family house, 20 rooms, rents \$900 per year. Leave your address at Farmer Publishing Co. office. H 27 t f o

FOR SALE—Violin, cellos, violas, bass violas. Prices from \$5 up. Sold on easy payments. Instruments taken in exchange. Fitch Piano Co., 84 Noble Ave. T 10 t o

FOR SALE—Beautiful upright mahogany piano. Will sacrifice \$100 if sold at once. Fitch Piano Co., 84 Noble Ave. T 10 t o

WANTED—Eight good trimmers for interior work to go to Rhinebeck, N. Y., John Gough, 839 Railroad avenue, City. T 15 d o

PIANOS FOR SALE—25 will be sold at a saving of \$125.00. Chickering, Steinway, Mason, Chickering, R. S. Howard, Milton, also piano players. We have pianos as low as \$30.00. Easy payments if desired. F. Fitch Piano Co., 84 Noble Ave. T 10 t o

CARD OF THANKS.

We desire to thank through the columns of this paper, the relatives and neighbors and also the friends who so kindly sent flowers and who assisted in the illness and death of our beloved son, Lieut. Fenton's home is in New Haven.

MR. AND MRS. JOHN COYNE

WEATHER FORECAST
Pleasant, with flurries of snow tonight or tomorrow.